

Understanding Sin

Amnon's Sin with Tamar // 2 Samuel 13

I. INTRO

- A. Fran succinctly summarized last week that saving faith requires repentance, and repentance requires an awareness of your own sin
- B. Salvation isn't about ethics, morals, processes, and procedures. Salvation isn't about politics, success in life, overcoming depression, or fixing your family.
 - 1. Though all those things are impacted BY salvation
- C. Salvation is about the eternal state of your soul. Salvation is about how you've been living in open rebellion against your Creator God in the greatest blasphemy of the universe, and to forgive you and restore you, Jesus died as your substitute.
- D. For those of us who have come face to face with our sin and realized our desperate need for a Savior, the cross gets bigger and bigger, more glorious, the more aware we become of our weakness and his greatness.
- E. I know my sins. I know my propensities. I know my struggles. I know my weakness. And you know yours.
- F. And it's a hard day when you see your same weaknesses not in the mirror... but in your kids
 - 1. When you see your pride in the way your children behave
 - 2. When you see your covetousness overflowing in Christmas lists
 - 3. When you hear your angry voice, your despairing plea, your self-condemnation, your insecurity on the lips of your child? It's tough
- G. But it's even more difficult when you see all that, and you don't see repentance
 - 1. See, we know sin. But we've also come to know grace.
 - 2. But to see a child, your own family, carry the banner of your struggles while rejecting heartfelt, godly sorrow over sin? This is why parents pray!
- H. Even the perfect parent (if they existed) cannot save their child
- I. And imperfect parents, like all of us, know how desperate for grace our children are b/c we know how desperate for grace we are
- J. In 2 Samuel 13, we see sin rip apart the family of David, the man after God's own heart.
- K. David was not perfect, but he was repentant. He continues to be imperfect.
- L. Although his children are sinful like their father, they are not repentant like him
- M. In this chapter, we see what happens when sin is tolerated instead of fought, when repentance is refused, and why each one of us (parents and children) is desperate for the grace of Jesus. **What does this teach us about sin?**

II. The situation

- A. *[1] Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. [2] And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. [3] But Amnon*

had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very crafty man. [4] And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." [5] Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'" [6] So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

1. Background:
 - a) Amnon = Firstborn; Daniel = Secondborn; Absalom = Thirdborn; Jonadab = Cousin
 - b) Retell
2. **Sin's consequences can be generational.** Re: Nathan's word in 2 Sam 12:10–11.
 - a) David's household reaps what his lust and deception sowed.
 - b) David's passivity in battle, in leadership, stretches into his family
 - c) David's lust / Amnon's lust
 - d) Sin leaves generational scars — the pattern of struggle often repeats — but the guilt of sin is personal.
 - e) E.G. We don't inherit our parents' guilt, but we often repeat their habits unless the grace of Jesus intervenes.
3. **Sin doesn't discriminate.** Good genes, wealth, power, and even godly parents don't protect you from moral decay.
 - a) Sin doesn't care if you're educated or simple, rich or poor, black or white, from Avalon or South Philly
 - b) Every person on the planet will fight against the enemy of sin
4. **Sin feasts on the flesh.** Amnon's "love" is actually lust. Sin disguises itself as a justifiable desire.
 - a) David & Bathsheba, "I deserve this rest." "I can cover up this affair." → A LIE
 - b) Amnon, "I love Tamar..." No you don't. You WANT her. A LIE
5. **Friends can sharpen you or dull you in your fight against sin.**
 - a) When you hear that Jonadab is crafty, what's the first thought that comes to mind? The serpent... Different word but same idea
 - (1) C.f. Nathan's godly counsel in the last chapter or Psalm 1
 - b) How about you? Are you surrounding yourself with Nathans or Jonadab's? Do your friends sharpen you or dull you?
 - c) Young people: Do you challenge your friends to "flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness," or do you cover for their sin?

III. The sin

- A. [7] Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him." [8] So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house,

where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. [9] And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him. [10] Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. [11] But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." [12] She answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. [13] As for me, *where could I carry my shame?* And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." [14] But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

1. **Sin is not surprising.** Hindsight is 20/20, but I feel as though we all could have predicted where this was going. A great tragedy.
 - a) Perhaps even worse is the fact that it could have been prevented.
 - b) Engine knocking... oil change thousands of miles overdue!
 - c) Preventive maintenance vs. Constant repair → save yourself a lot of pain by focusing more on preventive maintenance.
 - d) David → this is what happens when you don't lead your family
 - e) Amnon → this is what happens when your flesh is left unchecked
 - f) Jonadab → this is what happens when you listen to bad advice
 - g) Tamar → this is what happens when the innocent are left unprotected by those who should have intervened
2. Tamar is a sad picture of the catastrophic effect of sexual sin (all sin) → Where could I carry my shame? **Sin creates shame.**
 - a) Without Christ removing it, there's no hope, just regret & sorrow

IV. The aftermath

A. [15] Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up! Go!" [16] But she said to him, "No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. [17] He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her." [18] Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. [19] And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

1. **Sin makes empty promises.** I said it a few weeks back. Sin overpromises and underdelivers.
 - a) What Amnon thought would satisfy only sickens him.
2. **Sin leaves an aftermath.** Look at what happens. Tamar is now carrying the shame of what was done to her. Amnon is ashamed, but hides it in his anger.

a) It is easier for him to be mad at Tamar than to take ownership of what he has done.

(1) Isn't this what happens so frequently? It's easier to be mad at your spouse in a failed marriage than to blame yourself

(2) It's easier to blame the boss instead of wondering how you need to grow as an employee

(3) Some would even blame Tamar for being too flirtatious rather than seeing Amnon's insatiable lust

B. *[20] And her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house. [21] When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. [22] But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar.*

1. On the surface, it looks like Absalom is being dismissive, but he isn't.

Absalom takes these things into his heart and begins to stew on them...

V. Revenge

A. ***[23] After two full years, Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. [24] And Absalom came to the king and said, "Behold, your servant has sheepshearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant." [25] But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you." He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing. [26] Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" [27] But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. [28] Then Absalom commanded his servants, "Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not fear; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant." [29] So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled.***

1. **Sin, left unchecked, turns into gangrene.** We have talked about this before. Unrepentant bitterness, unforgiveness, unresolved anger, is a poison that seeps into your soul. Sin full grown gives birth to death

B. *[30] While they were on the way, news came to David, "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons, and not one of them is left." [31] Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. [32] But Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar. [33] Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead."*

C. *[34] But Absalom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by*

the side of the mountain. [35] And Jonadab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about." [36] And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted up their voice and wept. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly.

D. [37] But Absalom fled and went to Talmi the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day. [38] So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. [39] And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead. (ESV)

VI. What a depressing chapter about the realities of sin, but let us now look to Jesus

A. The failure of leaders and the need for the King of Righteousness

1. King David, though a man after God's heart, is tragically passive. He was passive in war. Passive towards Amnon. Passive towards Absalom. Passive towards Tamar after her tragedy.
2. His failure to bring justice exposes the limits of even the best human king.
3. This all points forward to the need for a better King — one who is both merciful and just // one full of grace and truth

B. The generational grip of sin broken → Caught & Taught / Nature & Choice

1. Nathan prophetically saw how sin would destroy the next generation
2. The same lust, deception, and violence that marked David's sin now repeat and multiply in his children. Rape. Violence.
3. Sin enslaves humanity, and we desperately need redemption that changes the heart (from the inside out), not just better self-control
4. How can we change who we are on the inside? How can we free ourselves from the curse of sin upon our ancestors and family? We can't
5. BUT the cross shows that sin's curse does not have the final word
6. Jesus hung upon a cross, accursed, to break the curse

C. Only Jesus can remove your shame and guilt

1. "Where could I carry my shame?" → This is the voice of every man, woman, and child who has ever innocently been violated
2. It's also the voice of everyone who has come face to face with their own failures and sin – those who see the blood on their hands, so to say
3. Where can you carry it? No where, but Jesus gladly carries it on your behalf!
4. The gospel expiates and removes our shame by placing it on Jesus
 - a) In the gospel, Tamar isn't viewed as desolate, but as adorned
 - b) She is given a husband, a house, and children
 - c) Her nakedness and reproach are taken away
5. It removes our guilt, placing the blame on Jesus' shoulders
 - a) It is no longer David who sent his daughter to get raped → Jesus took the blame for him
 - b) It is no longer David who sent his son to get murdered → Jesus took the blame for him

D. Only Jesus can bring true reconciliation

1. The chapter ends with alienation — David and Absalom estranged for years, the family torn apart.
 - a) Tamar desolate. Amnon dead. Absalom is in hiding.
 - b) We read nothing of how Tamar's mother feels, or Amnon's.
 - c) We wonder what David's people think of their king
2. We see fractured relationships after fractured relationships.
3. This is the brokenness which sin causes
 - a) It is what sin caused in the Garden
 - b) It is what is still seen in families and marriages today
4. But this brokenness anticipates the reconciliation Jesus brings — not just between God and humanity, but also between people divided by sin.

VII. Conclusion → **Where are you in the story?**

- A. Every one of us is in this story somewhere — the passive parent, the sin-consumed sinner, the wounded victim, the manipulative friend, the vengeful sibling..
- B. But Jesus steps before every role:
 1. He bears the sin of the guilty
 2. He heals the wounds of the broken
 3. He speaks for the voiceless and desolate
 4. He carries the blame for the perpetrator
 5. He forgives the embittered
- C. In this chapter, we've unpacked sin, but don't leave here just knowing sin better — leave here knowing the Savior who breaks its power.